

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00677 01 OF 02 211507Z

40

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USIE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OPR-02 SCCT-01 SAM-01 SAB-01

OMB-01 ORM-02 DHA-02 A-01 SY-05 PER-01 AID-05 AGR-05

OC-05 USSS-00 /104 W

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O 211305Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8255

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 00677 01 OF 02 211507Z

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVER LONDON UK
COMMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 0677

COPENHAGEN FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY FOR DAY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, LE
SUBJ: SYRIAN "LAST CHANCE" MEDIATION UNDERWAY

REF: BEIRUT 0642 (1410Z)

1. SUMMARY: SECURITY IN BEIRUT AND THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY CONTINUES TO DISSOLVE RAPIDLY. CHRISTIANS ARE BEING EVACUATED BY SEA TODAY FROM JIYE AND DAMOUR AS LEFTIST/PALESTINIAN ATTACKERS APPEAR TO HAVE VIRTUALLY WON BATTLE THERE. KIDNAPPINGS ARE UP IN BEIRUT. AIRPORT STILL CLOSED. SYRIAN MEDIATORS KHADDAM, SHEHABI, AND JAMIL HAVE ARRIVED AND ARE CLOSETED WITH FRANGIE AND OTHERS IN DESPERATE EFFORT TO FORMULATE SOLUTION. END SUMMARY.
2. SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT AND COUNTRY AS A WHOLE IS EXTREMELY GRIM AND ONLY ACTION ON POLITICAL LEVEL SEEMS LIKELY TO HALT CONTINUING SLIDE INTO UTTER CHAOS. AS OF 1200 HOURS LOCAL TODAY, JAN 21, WE ARE INFORMED THAT FIGHTINNG BETWEEN SHIAH AND AIN RUMMANEH IS UNUSUALLY HEAVY WITH POSSIBILITY THAT WE MAY BE WITNESSING INITIATION OF MUSLIM/LEFTISTS/PALESTINIAN OPERATION TO ELIMINATE AIN RUMMANEH SALIENT AND RELIEVE STILL-BESIEGED TEL ZAATAR REFUGEE CAMP. CHRISTIAN MILITIAS HAVE NOT RPT NOT APPARENTLY LAUNCHED ANTICIPATED ALL-OUT ASSAULT ON NABA DISTRICT IN EAST BEIRUT, BUT SKIRMISHING AND SHELLING IS OCCURRING THERE AS IN MOST

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 00677 01 OF 02 211507Z

TRADITIONAL BATTLEGROUNDS OF CITY. OVERNIGHT, SUBSTANTIAL FIRE-FIGHT, INVOLVING HEAVY WEAPONS, TOOK PLACE IN CITY CENTER (RIAD AS SOLH SQUARE AREA) BETWEEN PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS AND CHRISTIAN GUNMEN. LEFTIST PRESS MORNING JAN 21 IS DECLARING THAT FRONTLINE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED ALONG PATRIARCH HOYEK STREET FROM SEA TO BAB IDRIS BUT THIS REPORT UNCONFIRMED. HEAVY EXPLOSIONS AND AUTOMATIC ARMS FIRE IN AUDIBLE FROM HOTEL DISTRICT AND BEYOND THROUGH ZEITOUNE THIS MORNING.

3. TO SOUTH OF CAPITAL, WE SURMISE FROM CONFLICTING REPORTS THAT CHRISTIAN HOLDOUTS AT JIYE AND AT LEAST PART OF DAMOUR HAVE BEEN OVERRUN BY LEFTIST/PALESTINIAN ATTACKERS, NUMBERING UP TO 4,000 BY SOME ACCOUNTS. DURING NIGHT OF JAN 20-21, PRIVATE AND LEBANESE NAVY CRAFT OF ALL DESCRIPTIONS WERE OBSERVED FROM RAS BEIRUT SCURRYING BACK AND FORTH TO EVACUATE CHRISTIANS FROM DAMOUR AREA TO JOUNIEH. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT SOME BEACHEADS AT SAADIYAT AND POSSIBLY IN DAMOUR REGION STILL BEING HELD TO PERMIT RELIEF OPERATIONS TO CONTINUE.

4. LEBANESE GOVT APPEARS TO BE LOSING ITS PRESENCE IN MOST PARTS OF NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN BEKAA. PRESS AND OTHER SOURCES REPORT THAT RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT OBSERVED BURNT-OUT POLICE POSTS AND GOVT BUILDINGS OVER LARGE AREAS JAN 20 AND AMERICAN JOURNALIST CLAIMS TO HAVE LEARNED THAT INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (ISF) HEADQUARTERS HAS LOST RADIO CONTACT WITH MOST OF ITS INSTALLATIONS INCLUDING SOME IN BEIRUT. WE HAVE FIRM REPORT THAT ISF LINK WITH SIDON LOST JAN 21 WHEN ARMED MEN SEIZED SERAIL THERE. CHTAURA HAS BEEN OCCUPIED BY PALESTINIAN/LOCAL FORCES WITHOUT A BATTLE WHEN SMALL LEBANESE ARMY/ISF UNITS THERE WITHDREW. ARMY FORCES IN VALLEY HAVE REPORTEDLY CLASHED ON NUMBER OF OCCASIONS WITH THESE FORCES AND ARE UNDER SEVERE PRESSURE. ARMY SOURCES TOLD DATT THAT REMAINING MILITARY UNITS FAILING BACK ON ZAHLE AND ABLAH TO CONSOLIDATE. ZAHLE ITSELF IS UNDER INTENSE ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENT FROM FORCES SURROUNDING IT AND IS, OF COURSE, CUT OFF FROM BEIRUT BY OCCUPATION OF CHTAURA. SOME REPORTS STATE CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN ZAHLE VERY HEAVY. ACCORDING TO LEBANESE ARMY, TOTAL NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN FORCES IN BEKAA IS ABOUT 5,000 RPT 5,000 MEN FROM PALESTINE LIBERATION ARMY (PLA)

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PAGE 04 BEIRUT 00677 01 OF 02 211507Z

AND YARMUK BRIGADE (FATAH).

5. REFUGEES FROM QARANTINA HAVE BEEN RESETTLED IN CABINS AT BEACH CLUBS ALONG STRIP RUNNING SOUTH FROM RAMLET AL BAIDA. NEVERTHELESS, THEIR PRESENCE HAS BEEN INCITEMENT TO VENGEANCE BY MUSLIM STREET GANGS IN WEST BEIRUT. NEW WAVE OF KIDNAPPINGS WAS SET OFF JAN 20 AS RESULT AND UNKNOWN NUMBER OF LEBANESE CHRISTIANS WERE ABDUCTED AND EXECUTED SUMMARILY IN MANY PARTS OF WEST BEIRUT WITH BARBIR HOSPITAL SECTION OF CORNICHE MAZRA' AGAIN LEADING THE PACK. NO ACCURATE FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE FOR KIDNAPPINGS AND/OR KILLINGS. RAS BEIRUT, LIKE OTHER AREAS WHICH WERE NOT SCENES OF ACTUAL COMBAT, CONTINUES TO EXPERIENCE REIGN OF TERROR AS RESULT OF GENERAL LAWLESSNESS. WE HAVE REPORTS THAT AT LEAST

SOME KIDNAPPINGS WERE CARRIED OUT IN HAMRA AREA. EMBOFF WAS APPROACHED TWO BLOCKS ABOVE HAMRA BY FIVE ARMED MEN AT ABOUT 1500 HOURS JAN 20 WHO HAD VAGUE NOTIONS OF TAKING OFFICER WITH THEM; HE MANAGED TO BARTER HIS CAR AND CONTENTS OF HIS WALLET FOR HIS FREEDOM. AT LEAST TWO POVS BELONGING TO EMBASSY PERSONNEL WERE ALSO RIPPED OFF YESTERDAY AS CAR THIEVES CONTINUE TO MAKE HAY. IN VIEW OF INCREASING VARIETY

OF ARMED ELEMENTS TO FREQUENT RAS BEIRUT AREA IN DAYLIGHT HOURS, WE ARE DISMISSING BULK OF EMBASSY STAFF DAILY AT 1330 HOURS WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES.

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00677 02 OF 02 211658Z

41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USIE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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AGR-05 OC-05 USSS-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 ACDA-05 CCO-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8256

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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 00677 02 OF 02 211658Z

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE
CINCUSNAVER LONDON UK
COMMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 0677

COPENHAGEN FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY FOR DAY

6. AIRPORT REMAINS CLOSED WITH NO ONE WILLING TO EVEN CONSIDER WHEN AIR SERVICE CAN BE RESTORED. AIRPORT AREA IS SURROUNDED NOW BY MUSLIM/PALESTINIAN FORCES WHO HAVE EMPLACED MORTARS AND OTHER ARTILLERY AND ARE IN POSITION TO PREVENT USE OF AIRPORT FACILITIES, IF THEY WISH. AMCITS STUCK AT AIRPORT SINCE JAN 16 ARE SAFE AND ARE WELL TAKEN CARE OF BY MEA.

7. INCREASINGLY DESPERATE HOPES FOR CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL SETTLEMENT CENTER ON YET ANOTHER SYRIAN MEDIATION EFFORT TAKING PLACE TODAY. SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM, CHIEF OF STAFF SHEHABI, AND AIR COMMANDER JAMIL ARRIVED THIS MORNING FOR CRUCIAL SERIES OF TALKS WITH FRANGIE AND OTHER LEBANESE LEADERS. AS OF LAST REPORT, THEY WERE CLOSETED WITH FRANGIE, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HANNA SAID, AND G-2 CHIEF COL JULES BOUSTANY. KARAME IS EXPECTED TO BE BROUGHT INTO THE DISCUSSIONS BEFORE THE DAY IS OVER. AN ANNOUNCEMENT MAY COME THIS EVENING.

8. THE SYRIAN FIVE POINTS REMAIN THE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION, PROBABLY EXPANDED TO INCLUDE CEASEFIRE PROVISIONS. WE HEAR FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT FRANGIE HAS ACCEPTED THE FIVE POINTS IN PRINCIPLE. HOWEVER, HE IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO INFLUENCE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 00677 02 OF 02 211658Z

FROM HARD-LINERS SUCH AS CHAMOUN, WHO REPORTEDLY CONVINCED HIM YESTERDAY NOT TO GO TO DAMASCUS UNTIL THE SYRIANS "PROVE THEIR INTENTIONS" CONCERNING A CEASEFIRE AND WITHDRAW THE "INVADING" PALESTINIAN FORCES. THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THE CHRISTIAN SIDE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE IN GOOD FAITH TODAY WITH THE SYRIANS, FOR ANOTHER SOURCE CLOSE TO CHAMOUN HAS TOLD US BOTH THE PRES AND CHAMOUN AGREED YESTERDAY THAT THE SYRIAN EFFORT IS THE "ONLY HOPE". YET DEGREE OF CHAMOUN'S ATTACHMENT TO SYRIAN ROLE IS OBVIOUSLY SLIGHT. HE CONTINUES TO HARBOR IDEA THAT APPEAL SHOULD BE MADE TO UNITED NATIONS, AND HE REPEATED THIS VIEW PUBLICLY YESTERDAY. MUCH HINGES ON EXTENT TO WHICH FRANGIE TODAY WILL IGNORE THIS DISTRACTING IDEA AND CONCENTRATE ON WHAT SYRIANS CAN DO TO SOLVE THE CRISIS. THE MAIN STUMBLING BLOCK SUBSTANTIVELY WILL BE THE CHRISTIAN HOPE FOR "GUARANTEES", FIRST REGARDING PALESTINIAN BEHAVIOR AND SECONDLY ON FEARED FUTURE POLITICAL DEMANDS OF MOSLEMS.

9. THE SUNNI GRAND MUFTI RECEIVED THE ARAB AMBASSADORS YESTERDAY AND SPOKE TO THEM ABOUT THE PHALANGE TAKEOVER OF THE QARANTIA DISTRICT. HE WAS VERY UPSET ABOUT THIS EVENT. THE REACTION OF THE AMBASSADORS IS NOT KNOWN. THE JORDANIAN AMBASSADOR IS QUOTED IN THE PRESS AS EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE SYRIAN MEDIATION AND WARNING AGAINST AN INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE CRISIS.

10. LEFTIST LEADER KAMAL JUMBLATT RETURNED TO BEIRUT YESTERDAY AFTER A BRIEF VISIT TO DAMASCUS, WHERE HE WAS RECEIVED BY PRES ASAD AND FONMIN KHADDAM. WE HAVE NO REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF HIS VISIT, BUT IT CLEARLY WAS PART OF SYRIA'S CONTINUING POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS ON LEBANON.
LAMBRAKIS

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Message Attributes

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